

Planning Notes

Location: Sharon Town Hall

Date: May 5, 2008

Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm

Purpose: Comprehensive Plan Public Meeting

Present: Bernadetta Vrooman, Gene Cechnicki, Lori Nolfo, Ray Parsons, Pam Tichy, Debora Cross, Bob Spohn, Brian Fleury, and Lillian Bruno

Also Present: James McFadden, Sandra Manko, Jody Zakrevsky, Bill Ziese, Barbara, John Rodden Sr. and John Rodden

Notes:

Discussion regarding this public meeting: There was an introduction of the Comprehensive Plan Committee and it was discussed that this committee is updating the Comprehensive Plan and will be utilized for future generations in Sharon. Brian Fleury, stated that this meeting was initiated by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to understand how "friendly" the Town of Sharon is to open, run and keep a business in the town. There will be several questions that the committee would like to ask these business owners to determine this information.

Question One: *Are there any Agricultural Businesses present tonight?* No

Question Two: *As business owners how has the zoning in Town of Sharon been?* It was noted that for the business owners present, the zoning as is, was accommodating. These businesses states that they operate in Sharon Hill and believe they are too far out in the town to be affected by zoning. They feel if they were closer to the Village they would have more issues (parking, noise, fumes).

Discussion regarding the intersection between State Route 145 and Route 20: It was noted by these business owners that the state has spent \$35 million dollars to try to improve this section of roadway and have created a "complete catastrophe" that is affecting people lives. It was also mentioned that there has never been a state speed limit sign at this location and tractor trailers

speed by and have to slam on their brakes when approaching the "hill" in Sharon Hill. This situation makes unsafe conditions for the residents, business owners and their customers. It was suggested that this is a business district and if a speed limit is posted it could help with this problem.

Question Three: Has anyone every applied for a permit in the Town of Sharon?

James McFadden stated that 1 and 1/2 years ago, stated that he purchased 100 tractor trailers to store and sell on his business property which has three plus acres and also where businesses just 500 ft away were doing the same type of storage, but he received a letter from the Town Code Enforcement Officer stating that the trailers needed to be removed and were not allowed on his property. Mr. McFadden stated that he spent close to \$3,000.00 to move the trailers to a neighboring parcel to be temporarily stored. However, in the end it was noted that all he needed was a special use permit from the town and the trailers were allowed back on the original parcel. It was noted that Mr. McFadden suggested that a personal visit would have been nicer rather than a letter and the town officials could have offered help in this procedure so that it could be done the right way.

Question Four: What is your employee base and length of business?

McFadden's: 9 employees and 3 live in Schoharie County. Most employees travel 10 miles where one employee travels 20 miles. (20 year old business operation)

Sharon's Springs Garage: Four employees and a couple part-time employees. This business has local employees that live in Schoharie County.

Sharon Hill Garage: (30 year old business operation)

These businesses' clientele are stated as coming from Cherry Valley, Sharon and the immediate surrounding areas

Question Five: How do you feel about taxes? Taxes are too much but this is something that is handled at a state level.

Question Six: Hypothetically, if Sharon Hill could have either water or sewer, what would be more important for a business?

Water, because the water supply in the Town of Sharon is all sulfur. It was stated that this would never happen in Sharon Hill because they are too far out and there is not enough residents to justify water. It was reminded that this Comprehensive Plan is looking for the future, not the present. This Committee is trying to avoid haphazard development for the future.

Discussion regarding location of businesses: It was suggested that businesses remain separate from residential areas. It was suggested to keep commercial in Sharon Hill and also commercial on the main roads and residential on side roads (Central Avenue in Albany). It was sated that these business owners are buying the surrounding land behind their businesses so that they do not have any residential complaints. This would be solved if commercial was with commercial and residential was with residential. There was a concern

that if you cluster similar businesses, like Cobleskill with three pizza parlors, it would become unattractive and unnecessary. Also, there was concern that increasing residential and commercial development could put a tax on the town's infrastructure (water and sewer).

Discussion regarding wells and septic systems: It was discussed that residents that are used to municipal water and sewer are unaware how to properly utilize water and septic systems because improper usage can tax the system. Education needs to inform new residents on proper maintenance and usage of wells and septic systems.

Discussion regarding alternative energies: It was discussed that the Town of Sharon would be interested in wind energy facilities. It was stated that Bill Ziese states that it is not the wind, it is the way the wind developers are handling proposed projects and the energy derived from wind will not be "pumped" into Sharon directly. It was suggested that there is a lack of openness. It was stated that the proposed turbines in Cherry Valley would affect Sharon (roads, view, etc.) and they would like to be informed. This Committee is interested in a wind ordinance to establish criteria and rules for such facilities.

Question Seven: How is your internet service and how does it affect your business? These business owners state that they have no high speed internet without satellite. It was suggested that County residents in the near future will be seeing a survey regarding this issue. A company may propose to install fiber optic broadband technology along power lines. It was stated by attendees that this is essential in order to attract new businesses and maintain existing businesses. It was suggested that this could bring employers that would keep our young residents in Sharon. It was stated that Sharon and Schoharie County is like a "vacationland" where people live here to retire (a retirement town). It is suggested that it would be nice to maintain this feel however, there needs to be growth that makes this community thrive in the future.

Discussion regarding housing: Cluster housing was mentioned as a way to maintain open space and create housing. It was mentioned that you have to be careful with cluster housing because of the quality and quantity of water and sewer. It was suggested that condominiums and town homes would be a viable option. There was a concern that if there are small lot sizes, a house could be placed on every 1/4 acre and become like "Long Island." There was also concern with the size of the house placed on a parcel. Some people would place a 3,000 square foot home on a 1/4 acre lot.

Discussion regarding mobile home parks: It was suggested that a mobile home park that has strict regulations (maintenance, parking, sheds, and foundations) is far better than having one mobile home spread out every 4 miles.

Discussions regarding farming in Sharon: It was discussed that all attendees like the open space that farming brings to the community. However,

they fear farming will be obsolete in 10 years because the farmer cannot survive. It proposes a concern because a fear that the agricultural land will become residential and commercial and no longer open space.

Discussion regarding creating a balance: It was suggested that a balance needs to be created between businesses and agricultural. The desire for better schools, fire, ambulance, and internet is needed to attract businesses. It was suggested that Sharon before the introduction of the NYS Thruway was a thriving community, but once you take the people out of the equation it starts crumble. Thus, Sharon needs to create a place for people to desire to stay in while creating a balance between business, agricultural and the rural environment Sharon has.

Discussion regarding the comprehensive planning process: This process was initiated by the Korean development of the bathhouses because that proposed development could spill to the town and the town wanted to be prepared for that. It was suggested by the attendees that the more rural you are the more attractive you are to business industries and the Town of Sharon needs to be prepared for such an issue. This committee would also like to examine the town's current zoning and to identify any potential problems and make suggestions that the public and the committee has recommended. This committee would like to create a document with goals and objectives containing timeframes for these to be accomplished. It will serve as a guideline for the town. All residents are allowed to attend the committee's meetings which are held monthly on the 2nd Monday and invites tonight's participants to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM and the next meeting will be May 12, 2008